



NEWSLETTER

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair, Democratic Caucus

Ridley-Thomas Receives an "A" On Racial Equity Report Card

In recognition of his progressive legislative agenda in 2005, Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) received an "A" grade from the Applied Research Center's California Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity.

"I really appreciate the Center recognizing my work in the Legislature. Many people feel that because of racism, the notion of persuading groups from diverse ethnic backgrounds to work together in an effective coalition is unrealistic. I contend that the success or failure of such endeavors depends upon leadership," said Ridley-Thomas.

Ridley-Thomas made the honor role for 100% support of racial equity and received high praise for Assembly Bill 901, the Predatory Lending Protection Act.

The 2005 Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity evaluates and grades the Governor and members of the Legislature on their responses to eighteen pieces of legislation that would have the most direct positive impact on communities of color. The report card

focuses on five issue areas: educational equity, economic justice, health equity, civil rights, and criminal justice.

The report also noted that although people of color currently make up 54 percent of California's population and will make up a projected 77 percent by 2050, significant racial inequities remain in education, health care, economic opportunity, civil rights and other areas.

"My district is a microcosm of the state. It is one of the most diverse districts in the nation and I plan to continue pursuing a legislative agenda that addresses the needs of all of my constituents," said Ridley-Thomas.

The study was co-sponsored by the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network, the California Church Impact, Californians for Justice and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's California State Conference.

If you would like to review the report card, you can access the Applied Research Center's website at www.arc.org. ■

Honoring Long Time Los Angeles City Councilmember and Environmental Icon Marvin Braude



On December 8th, 2005, the City of Los Angeles and environmentalists nationwide lost a tremendous leader and friend in Marvin Braude. His work on the Los Angeles City Council helped to craft and define the Santa Monica Mountains Recreation area and most notably Los Angeles' pioneering anti-smoking ordinance.

"Marvin Braude took special pride in the area he represented and fought tirelessly for his constituents for 32 years in Council chambers. He was a strong advocate for effective law enforcement and police reform. It was my honor to learn from him for the decade that we served together on the City Council.

Marvin's tenacity but willingness to negotiate in the best interest of his constituents will be sorely missed. His work will serve as a model to this city's Council members for years to come. "I want to express my deepest sympathy to the Braude family at this difficult time", said former City Councilmember and current State Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas. ■

Please join

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas

and the

48th Assembly District Empowerment Congress (ADEC)

**4th Annual Empowerment Summit
on the State Budget**

Saturday, January 21, 2006 • 8:30 a.m. – 12 noon

Orthopedic Medical Magnet High School

300 W. 23rd Street (Corner of 23rd & Grand Ave.)

For more information please call (213) 745-6656 or visit www.ADEC48.org

"I believe that a budget is more than an indication of our revenues and obligations. It is also a reflection of our values, commitments and priorities. Your participation in the process is especially important this year. I urge you to get involved to make a difference." - Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas

Wishing You a Happy and Fulfilling New Year!

Ridley-Thomas' 2005 Legislation Becomes Law

On January 1, 2006, two bills authored by Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas become law. Assembly Bills 819 and 901 position California with two of the most comprehensive legislative frameworks in the nation regarding colorectal cancer and predatory lending protection.

AB 819 allows taxpayers to designate a contribution on their tax return to the **California Colorectal Cancer Prevention Fund**.

"We are losing too many lives to a disease that largely can be prevented. Colorectal cancer is one cancer where regular screening clearly has benefits," said Ridley-Thomas. "Since I became aware of the devastating effects of this disease, I have encouraged people to learn the facts about colorectal cancer and share that message with others. Our challenge, especially in the African-American community, is to educate Californians about the importance of regular screening."

Sponsored by the Stennis Family Foundation, AB 819 received strong support from the American Cancer Society, Union Bank of California, and Hall of Fame basketball player Earvin "Magic" Johnson.

The Uniform Lending Reform Act (AB 901) was sponsored by Consumers Union and received support from a wide range of local governments, community organizations and housing advocates.

AB 901 will raise the protected loan amount from \$250,000 to match Fannie Mae's (the Federal



Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas is joined on the Assembly floor by Stennis Family Foundation founder Erin Stennis, actress Jasmine Guy and Dr. Timothy Simmons. The Stennis Family Foundation was the sponsor of Assembly Bill 819, the California Colorectal Cancer Prevention Fund.

National Mortgage Administration) conforming loan limit, currently \$359,650. Under AB 901, the threshold will be adjusted annually in order to keep pace with Fannie Mae's loan limit. The bill also calls for the Real Estate Fraud Prosecution Trust Fund to report annually to the Legislature regarding funds received, complaints lodged and investigated, and the number of convictions.

"Predatory lending is on the rise in California. This bill provides the necessary protection to communities of color and prevent their main source of wealth from being stripped away," said Ridley-Thomas.

The measure adds new consumer protections after an unfriendly California Supreme Court ruling in 2005 prevented local jurisdictions from enacting even stronger legal protections than current state law provides. ■

Statement on NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue's Visit to Los Angeles

"I am encouraged that Commissioner Paul Tagliabue met with Mayor Villaraigosa, and I would like to interpret this as an indicator of a very high probability that the Coliseum will – as it should – be the venue of first choice for the NFL's long awaited return to Los Angeles. But I remain cautious in my optimism, since the Commissioner has met with three other Los Angeles mayors before. Still, based on the Commissioner's public statements, I see no reason why the NFL shouldn't solidly lock into the Coliseum as the venue to make its return to Los Angeles – sooner rather than later." The City's case is strong, we've done what was needed on the state legislative front in the form of Assembly Bill 2805, and the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has credibly demonstrated their firm commitment.

It seems to me the Commissioner has to take note of the fact that the Governor, the Legislature, the City Council, CRA, and the Mayor are all on the same page. That sends a clear message to the NFL owners that all the public entities, elected officials, and more importantly the people that we all represent, want to see NFL football in the Coliseum again.

Los Angeles is speaking with one voice: We want the NFL to return to the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. It's time for the League to reciprocate.

I strongly urge the NFL to make a decision as soon as possible so that the league can celebrate Super Bowl L (50) in 2016, America's unofficial national sports holiday, in the same venue, the Coliseum, and the same host city, Los Angeles, where it all began. We should finalize this deal so that this national treasure (the Coliseum) can once again serve the community's and NFL fans' purpose in the way it was intended." ■



Liberty and Justice for All: Celebrating the Memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This month, January 16, 2006, we celebrate the 77th birthday of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. During the three-day holiday weekend, we honor his life and legacy. Dr. King challenged the conscience of our country and affirmed our dearest values. He lived his life in the belief

that 'liberty and justice for all' is not just a pledge, but a fundamental principle that must guide us as a people.

Because of Dr. King and the millions of ordinary Americans who fought for civil rights, our country has made significant progress. While we celebrate those successes, we cannot rest. As Dr. King said more than 40 years ago at the 1963 March on Washington, we must remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off....Now is the time to make justice a reality for all God's children.